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C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 001384

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/27/2017  
TAGS: [EFIN](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [KTFN](#) [JO](#)  
SUBJECT: CENTRAL BANK GOVERNOR DISCUSSES ANTI-MONEY  
LAUNDERING LAW DEVELOPMENTS WITH AMBASSADOR

REF: A. AMMAN 1218

[1](#)B. AMMAN 1163

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires, Reason 1.4 (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) Governor Umayya Toukan told the Ambassador March 27 that the draft Anti-Money Laundering (AML) law did not pass during the just-concluded session of Parliament because of inadequate government lobbying, a recalcitrant Parliament, and a lingering belief on the part of some influential Jordanians that AML controls will deter potential investment in Jordan. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) CBJ Governor Toukan reiterated his previously voiced opinion (ref A) that the Jordanian government - especially the Office of the Prime Minister and other Cabinet-level agencies - failed to campaign vigorously for the passage of the AML law during this parliamentary session. NOTE: Parliament officially adjourned on March 28. END NOTE. Claiming that the government "did not help us," Toukan singled out Deputy Prime Minister/Finance Minister Ziad Fariez as a lukewarm supporter of the draft legislation. Toukan noted, however, that King Abdullah was and remains supportive of the law.

[1](#)3. (C) Despite the lack of political support, the Governor stated that he had lobbied a variety of legislators, including the chairmen of the Finance and Legal Committees as well as the Deputy Speaker of the lower house, for passage of the AML law. In his view, these interventions ultimately proved unsuccessful in part because of this Parliament's demonstrated aversion to reform. "This Parliament is the worst in Jordan's history," he lamented.

[1](#)4. (C) Toukan suggested that a "strong lobby" against the AML law must exist within Jordan, although he could not offer details about specific individuals or groups that may be working against the law's passage. He speculated that

wealthy businessmen might be against the law. There is also a persistent belief among influential Jordanians, Toukan explained, that the AML law will deter investment in Jordan.

¶5. (C) Toukan indicated that the CBJ sent a letter last week to the Prime Minister requesting that the AML law be granted urgency status for the next parliamentary session scheduled to begin in November 2007. The letter argued that the absence of an AML law places Jordan in the embarrassing position of being associated with Somalia and Djibouti as the only Arab League member states lacking this important legislation.

¶6. (C) Despite the law's continued stagnation before Parliament, Toukan does not favor its imposition through the Jordanian constitution's "temporary law" mechanism, which allows the King to promulgate laws on a temporary basis while Parliament is out of session. In his view, temporary laws have a negative stigma associated with them given the popular perception that they have been overused by the GoJ in the past. (Ref B)

¶7. (C) Comment: Post shares Toukan's assessment that some Jordanians believe that an AML law would hamper Jordan's financial sector. Post has seen no evidence, however, that there is organized opposition to the law as Toukan suggests. Another important factor which he did not mention is the perception of a number of members of Parliament that the AML law is an "American law." This same perception would likely be a factor in the GoJ's internal deliberations if the government does consider using its "temporary law" option.

RUBINSTEIN